

Praying for Kingdom Leadership DNA

People from every culture view leadership through the lens of their worldview as informed by the own culture and society, and thus people from every culture (expat teams as well as emerging leaders in the movements with which we work) must do the work to redeem their understanding of leadership (and everything else!) in light of the Kingdom of God.

The cultural view of leadership in our context is highly hierarchical and positional. Of course we knew this in theory, but we experienced some things early on that opened our eyes to how much the cultural view of leadership was affecting emerging leaders in the movement, and so we began (1) conversations around leadership in the Kingdom of God (studying various passages with leaders) and also began (2) praying intensively for leaders in specific ways.

(1) For example, early on “Burton” was clearly apostolic and was a fruitful evangelist and vision caster - but partly because of his view of leadership, he was a lousy discipler. As a former leader in the majority religious community, he saw the success of a leader as being measured by the number of that leader’s followers - not the growth or success of the followers... so he translated evangelism and apostolic work through his worldview lens and started amassing hundreds of followers, most of whom never grew beyond the initial discipleship lessons. When we realized that a huge percentage of growth in the movement was under Burton, but that most of the people under him had not reproduced generationally, we knew something was wrong. It took a few conversations between our local partner (Andy) and Burton to get to the root of the problem, and a few more conversations for Burton to understand that how he was approaching leadership was backwards from a Kingdom perspective. Andy studied the Word with Burton, and they came to the conclusion that in the Kingdom, a leader’s “success” is measured in the success of his followers or disciples. So if a leader has many followers who are not actually growing or reproducing, then that leader is actually a failure. This was a major paradigm shift for Burton, and for all the other leaders in the movement as well - but has built a foundation of servant leadership and leaders willing to go the extra mile to help new believers grow and develop.

To combat the hierarchical view of leadership, we found (partly in discussing the issue, partly from our times of prayer and waiting on the Lord) that we needed to double down (or triple down!) on the concept of the priesthood of the believer. We had to help emerging leaders see that every one of God’s people is calling to be a priest and ambassador to a lost world. That was God’s original intention in the Old Testament, and it’s His desire for how His Kingdom is to operate in the present and future. The more that new disciples studied and understood this concept (which is wildly different than their religious background’s understanding of leadership), the more they reproduced generationally. There are still acknowledged leaders in the movement who are honored and respected -but they are honored and respected because of their service to the churches, not because of their structural position.

Another aspect of ministry and leadership in our context is that it is highly relational - so meeting with someone and jumping right into a strategic conversation is not only culturally tone-deaf, but actually detrimental to emerging leaders’ understanding of leadership in the Kingdom. We actually developed a tool to help leaders remember that the relational connection was just as important (if not more so) than the strategic questions and coaching that they might do when meeting with another leader in their network. The tool focuses on 5

relational questions (relationship with God, marriage \ family, workplace, others in the church, and with the lost) and then 5 strategic questions (health of churches in network, leadership development, financial health (giving \ supporting \ sending), progress toward end vision, and next steps).

(2) Early on, and still now, we spend time praying about the above, that leaders would continue to grow deeper in their understanding of Kingdom leadership.

In terms of how we prayed (and are praying) for leaders, we recognized different kinds of leaders in the movement - **movement leaders** (big leaders connected to many parts of the larger movement), **elder teams** (generally overseeing the health and growth of networks of house churches in one geographic location), **apostolic teams** (who are sent out in one way or another from networks to start new works), and **deacons** (a biblical deacon, not what probably comes to mind when you think of deacons) who help elder teams manage the health of the networks, handle finances, and help apostolic teams accomplish their mission. Each subset of leaders had different needs (and of course they had lots of overlapping needs as well), and so we prayed differently for each group. We prayed lots of Pauls' prayers for the churches, but here are some specific things we prayed for the different groups of leaders:

Movement Leaders:

- devoted to prayer & ministry of the Word
- God-sized vision
- Fear of the Lord
- Lovers of Your Word
- Vast humility
- Not slaves but friends
- Raise up prophetic voices
- Not taking up offense
- Protection from the evil one and evil men
- People who seek your glory and celebrate your goodness
- Grow them in love
- Hold fast their first love
- To know and own their responsibility

Elder Teams:

- Skillful hands and humble hearts
- Gifts of the Spirit
- Devoted to Prayer
- Shepherd's hearts
- Emotional health
- Pastoral skills

Apostolic Teams:

- Healthy, loving marriages
- Loving parents
- People of prayer
- Desperate dependence
- Shared wisdom
- Raise up teachers
- Soft hearts
- Men of tears, humble, broken
- Faithful, teachable, happily led by Your Spirit
- Refresh and strengthen

Apostolic Teams:

- devoted to prayer
- Isaiah 61 anointing
- Raise up visionaries
- Heart for the unreached
- Holy dissatisfaction
- humble, teachable, faithful abiders
- Brokenness before You
- Desperate to see Your Kingdom come
- Weeping in prayer for the lost

- Boldness based on the promises & faithfulness of God
- Pour out evangelistic gifts
- Open doors for Your Word
- Clear communication
- Train Your sent ones as intercessors
- Hold fast their first love
- Father, glorify Your Son!
- Deliver them from wicked men
- Pour out the fire of the prophetic in every apostolic work - loosed to bring light to darkness and destroy the works of the devil
- Bold men and women who carry Your power and Your humility
- Vision that sees beyond the darkness
- Preach the Kingdom and heal the sick
- Cycles of sending
- God-sized vision
- People who tear down walls
- People who bring deliverance through their tears
- Simple men and women who serve a great God

Deacons:

- impatient to see Your Kingdom
- Direct their hearts into your love and into the patience of Christ
- Make their love abound more and more in knowledge and all discernment
- Sincere and without offense
- Filled with the fruits of righteousness
- Teach them to wrestle in prayer for each other
- Stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured
- Mature Your bride!
- Eager to serve
- Complementary gifting
- Working and leading from a place of prayer
- Deep abiding
- Recognition of value by elders and apostles
- Faithful men and women
- Worthy of Your calling

At this point, in times of intercession for the movement, probably more than half of our time is spent praying for the leaders, both generally and specifically for different needs or struggles they are facing.